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European Union

Biotechnology

European Parliament approves strict rules on GMO exports

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Report Highlights:

The European Parliament approved the second reading of a draft Regulation on cross border movement of GMOs. If the European Parliament's amendments are accepted by the Member States, the new rules would lay down strict labeling and consent rules for GMOs exported from the EU. It also pressures the eight EU countries who have yet to ratify the Cartagena Protocol to do so. The text could be formally adopted on the 13th June by the Environment Council.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E2]

The European Parliament approved a draft Regulation on cross border movements of biotech agricultural products. The next step is formal adoption by the Environment Council, which could take place as soon as June 13.

The proposed Regulation provides that the export of GMO material from the EU is only possible for authorized GMOs and with the explicit permission of the importing country. Amendments adopted during the Second Reading at the European Parliament included that exporters must notify importers in writing of GM shipments, that the exporter must comply with the importing countries legislation in this area, even if it goes beyond the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol and that the precautionary principle must be respected.

The draft also requires the eight remaining EU Member States who have yet to ratify the Cartagena Protocol do so (UK, Ireland, Finland, Luxembourg, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Germany).

Currently, the Protocol has been ratified by 49 countries. Once 50 countries have ratified it, it enters into force 90 days later.

According to European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström, "The European Union has been a key player in the international negotiations from the very beginning, and we are now sending a clear signal that we are able to honour our commitments".

She also stated "The Protocol will ensure that countries exporting or importing GMOs can rely on a sound regulatory framework, so that they can make informed choices. This Protocol will be particularly helpful for developing countries, which may lack the resources to properly assess the risks and the benefits of biotechnology".

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